

PLATE VII.—THE ENFIELD CEDAR.

THE Cedar of Lebanon has been generally supposed to be a native of Mount Libanus only, but modern travellers have found it on Mount Taurus and other elevated situations in the Levant; and it is so hardy, that it can easily adapt itself to any climate. It has not been much cultivated in England till of late years; although its quick growth, and its capability of thriving in a meagre soil, render it peculiarly desirable for those bleak and barren situations which have hitherto been principally devoted to the Fir.

The frequent and solemn allusions to the Cedar in Holy Writ, seem to give it something of a sacred character; which is increased by a knowledge of the esteem in which it was held by the ancients, on account of its fragrant scent, its incorruptible nature, and above all, its durability; insomuch that it is recorded, that in the temple of Apollo at Utica, there was found timber of Cedar nearly two thousand years old.

The Enfield Cedar stands in the garden of the Manor House, or old Palace, in Enfield; the occasional retirement of Queen Elizabeth before she came to the throne, and the frequent scene of her royal pleasures afterwards, in the early part of her reign. In the year 1660 it became the residence of the learned Doctor Uvedale, Master of the Grammar School of Enfield at that time, and famous for his curious gardens, and choice collection of exotics. The Cedar, which is now one of the finest in the kingdom, was put into the ground by him, a plant brought direct from Mount Libanus, probably by one of his scholars. In 1779 it measured fourteen feet six inches at the base, and forty-five feet nine inches in height, eight feet of the upper part having been broken off by a high wind in 1703. The principal branches extended in length from the stem, from twenty-eight to forty-five feet, and the contents of the tree, exclusive of the boughs, was about two hundred and ninety-three cubic feet. In the night of the fifth of November, 1794, it again suffered by a high wind, which, blowing furiously from the north-west, deprived it of the principal top branch, which fell with a tremendous crash, and injured several of the branches below in its fall. In 1821, Dr. May, its present proprietor, and the able Master of the Palace School at Enfield, took its measurement, which was as follows: seventeen feet in circumference at one foot from the ground; sixty-four feet in perpendicular height, and containing five hundred and forty-eight cubic feet of timber; exclusive of the branches, which from north-east to south-west extend eighty-seven feet, and contain about two hundred and fifty feet of timber; making in the whole nearly eight hundred cubic feet of timber.

Some years ago, this great ornament to Enfield was destined to be cut down by a gentleman who had purchased the spot on which it stands; but the contemplation of its loss excited so much regret and discontent among several of the most respectable inhabitants in the place, that he was obliged to relinquish the barbarous design; even after the trench was dug around it, the saw-pit prepared, and the axe almost lifted up for its destruction. An account of the whole proceeding, as well as a very minute one of the tree itself, is to be found in Dr. Robinson's valuable and interesting history of Enfield.

PLATE VIII.—THE YEW TREE AT ANKERWYKE.

THE YEW was formerly much esteemed in England, when the cross-bow was in use. Spenser praises it as

"The Eugh obedient to the bender's will;"

and that it had merited the reputation for many centuries, is evident from Virgil's mention of it for the same purpose:

"—Ityræos Taxi torquentur in arcus."

But as the use of fire-arms has superseded that of the bow, and as the improvements in modern taste have equally exploded the formal hedges and fantastical figures, for which the Yew was highly prized by the gardeners in Queen Elizabeth's time, it is no longer cultivated as it was in former ages; when it was enjoined to be planted in all Church-yards and cemeteries: partly to ensure its cultivation; partly to secure its leaves and seeds from doing injury to cattle; and partly because its unchanging foliage and durable nature made it a fit emblem of immortality; whilst, at the same time, its dark green rendered it not less aptly illustrative of the solemnity of the grave.